THOUGHTS OF A SHAKTA

M. P. PANDIT

GANESH & COMPANY

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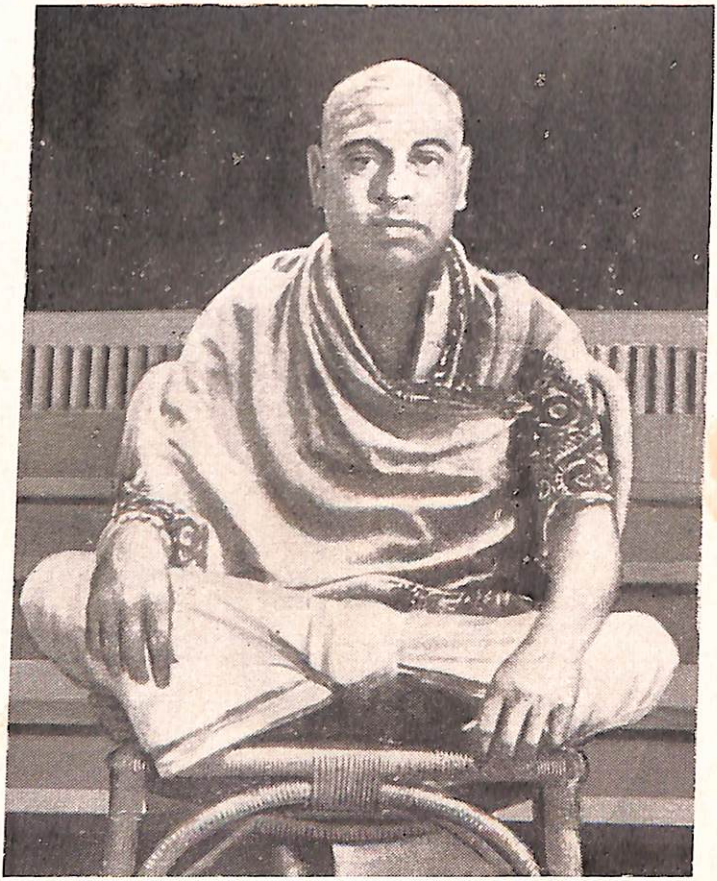

YOGISHANANDA NATHA
(Sri Nilakantha Mahadeva Joshi)

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INTRODUCTION

In an interesting passage in the *Kiraṇāgama-vyākhyā*, Aghora Sivacharya records: "I shall declare the supreme tradition of Gurus in the Śaiva Śāstra. For some reason, an adept in the Mantras came down from the Kailāsa. A disciple of Nandikeshvara, devoted to his lotus feet, he instructed the Gods, in all their number, in the Knowledge of Śiva. Knowing the special truths of all the Principles, learned in their manifestation, ever concentrated on the Mantras of both the Śaiva and the Śākta wings, indifferent to and turned away from the eight siddhis, *animā* etc., causing happy wonder to all by his art of entering other bodies and the like, this personage celebrated by the divine Rishis, came to the South and instructed the Yogins thereof in the Knowledge of Śiva. Three were his disciples who had crossed the Ocean of the Knowledge of Śiva. They were: Ugrajyoti, Sadyojyoti and that Nilakantha,* the inaugurator of the Śaiva Śāstra. Of Guru Ugrajyoti there were five great

*Author of a number of Vedāntic treatises e.g., *Śrīkaṇṭha Bhāṣya* etc.

disciples, from Gauda, Saurashtra, Kashmira, Mahārāshtra etc."

It was this Mahārāshtra that the King of Kandy, Parākrama Bāhu (11th century A. D.) thought of when he sought to arrange for authenticated worship at the Śrī Rāmanātha Temple in Rāmeshwaram after he had completed the construction of the *garbhagṛha*, sanctum-sanctorum, of the holy place. He arranged to get 512 families of Brahmins from Mahārāshtra for offering Pūja and spreading their tradition in this part of the country. These families were devoted to Śiva Pasupati and were known as *Pāśupata Śaivas.** Among these emigrants was born one Lokanatha Muni, a man of uncommon attainments.†

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*There is a pointed reference to these *Pāśupata Śaivas* in the famous work on astrology by Jagaraja Śekhara, *Jagarāja Śekhara Mālé.*

†He is referred to by name in the *Tevaiyula Palapattare* by Chokkanātha Pillai of the court of Muthu Vijaya Raghunātha Setupati (who came some three or four hundred years after Parākrama Bāhu and who, incidentally, is said to have built the famous third corridor in the temple and started the *ratha-utsava*). The said work has been edited by Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer and is available.

Many Āgamas came to be written down among these followers of the Śaiva tradition. But they were distinct from the other sects of the Śaiva Path in one important respect. They worshipped the Śakti as enjoined in the *Makutottara Āgama* and *Chandrajnāna Āgama*, side by side with their worship of Śiva as instructed in the *Cintya* and *Kāraṇa Āgamas*. Some worshipped the *Śrī Cakra*, some worshipped Śiva and some adored both. This is how the worship of *Śrī Cakra* came into vogue in Rāmeshwaram.

This community of the Śaiva-Śākta worshippers and *upāsakas* held its own for a long period. Latterly, however, due to deterioration in their social and economic conditions, their cultural and religious supremacy was affected adversely. So much so, that when in 1872, the Jagadguru Śankarācharya of Śringēri, Narasimha Bhārati, visited the temple city, these descendants of the once-towering elite gave a very poor account of themselves, a development which led ultimately to the intrusion of outside influences in the affairs of their organisation.

Reference has been made to Lokanātha Muni, one of the leaders of this community in the earlier

times. Son of Amritananda Nātha of the Śākta tradition, he was known as Satyānanda Nātha and was the progenitor of an illustrious line of scholars and *upāsakas* who established the *trikūṭālaya-nātha-paddhati* for worship in the Ramanatha temple.*

This family has been hereditarily in charge of the temple of Śrī Rāma at Gandhamadana, about a mile away from the temple at Rāmeshwaram. Śrī Mahādeva Joshi, grandson of Lōkanātha Muni, established a *Śrī Cakra* in gold in this temple, below the *pādukās* which are worshipped daily. Traditional pūja of *Śrī Cakra* is performed. His descendant Mahādeva Joshi came early under the influence of and in contact with a remarkable saint of the Dattātreya cult, Śrī Narasimha Saraswati of Gangāpūr, and a number of happenings of a supernatural character are recorded in this connection. He passed away in 1942 at the age of seventy-five, leaving four sons of whom

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*He himself was the main worshipper at the temple and wrote a number of important works; *akhila bhūmaṇḍala prakhyāta lokanātha munivarah*, runs a colophon.

Śrī Nīlakantha Joshi is the most well-known for his versatile accomplishments in the field of Āgamas, Astrology and more particularly the *Vidyā* of *Śrī Cākra.*

Śrī Nīlakantha Mahādeva Joshi was born at Rāmeshwaram in 1903. He was initiated in the temple worship and allied matters by his father according to the *Śaiva sampradāya.* Nīlakantha was a self-willed boy from his very infancy and never underwent formal school education. His amazing scholarship and learning is entirely a result of his own effort and study. One day his Guru placed a copy of the *Vāmakēśvara Tantra* in his hands and asked him to read it over and over again. This is the one book which he accordingly read, studied and pored over repeatedly and he avers to this day that his knowledge of the subject, his mastery over the Śanskrit language, are all derived from this sacred work. But we anticipate.

Young Nīlakantha was in search of a Guru from whom he could receive *dīkṣā* into the *Śākta sampradāya.* He had studied a large number of Tantra texts but was not satisfied. It was only when he was 19 that a renowned Guru,

Ambānanda Nātha, came that way with a hundred disciples. Ambānanda Nātha was the ninth in succession in the line of Bhaskara Rāya Makhi and it was he who, in one of his subsequent visits, initiated Nīlakantha in *Śri Vidyā*, empowered him to be an Ācārya* and authorised him to conduct Āgamic rituals,† instructed as he was in a dream to do so. While giving him the initiation, the Guru charged him not to pray for material prosperity, not even to ask for spiritual siddhi, but to seek only Love from the Divine Mother, Lalita Tripurāmbika. The name given to him in this line of tradition is Yogishananda Nātha.

Popularly known as Bhāu Joshi in his circle, Śrī Nīlakantha Joshi has always been a respected figure in this region and looked up to for guidance whenever there has arisen any point of controversy in matters of Āgamic importance. He was invited to direct and he conducted the great *Kumbha Abhiṣēkam* at the Rāmeshwaram temple in 1947. He was prevailed

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**ācārya-abhiṣeka.*

†*āgamokta nitya-naimittika-kāmya karma adhikāra.*

upon by the trustees of the temple to join as the *Sarva Sādhakācārya* and help to conduct qualifying courses for priests and certify to their competency. He held that position till a few years ago when he resigned from it in view of more pressing preoccupations.

Though he first visited our Āshram in the month of March 1959, and he has been visiting us regularly as an honoured guest since then, it was only last year, in May 1962, that I was privileged to come into contact with him. Panditji – as he is affectionately known in the Āshram – was a revelation to me in many respects. He made the Tradition of the Tantra living to me. He awakened my interest in many aspects of life in this sphere and helped me, directly and otherwise, to enter into their spirit. I have had the good fortune of being present in some of the informal gatherings at his residence during his brief visits here and have noted down some of his remarks and answers to queries in these sessions. The following pages contain a small selection from these notings. The choice has been made so as to be within the understanding of the average

mind interested in the higher values of life and the contents are arranged, as far as possible, subject-wise. There is, indeed a good deal of high philosophy and profound *upāsanā* in what he speaks or writes. But that has been deliberately kept out of this collection.

Sri Aurobindo Ashram
31 – 12 – 1963

M. P. PANDIT

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TANTRA ŚĀSTRA

Śāstra is of two kinds. There is the Śāstra based on experience, *anubhūti śāstra*; of this kind are the ancient scriptures, Veda, Āgama etc. Then there is the dialectical Śāstra, *śāstra śāstra*, expositions of Systems.

Generally speaking the Vaidik Dharma lays stress on the purification and preparing of the body, *śarīra samskāra*, while the Tāntrika looks to the purification of the inner being, *ātma-samskāra*.

The term *tantra* has been defined in various ways. One significant derivation is : what saves or protects the eternally pure, intelligent, principle of the Paramātman in oneself, *nitya-śuddha-buddha-paramātma-tattvam svasmin trāyate iti tantram.*

THE LORD

He is stainless, eternal, omnipotent, the Lord. It is a part of Himself that He lets loose in the form of sparks, *sphulinga*. He is thus the source of the multitude of beings. The sparks are His, eternal, not different yet separate.

This spread, *prasara*, of the Self atomwise (*aṇumaya*) is *Sphāra*, the mighty Throb.

Life is governed by the course of creation, *sṛṣṭi-kṛtyam* and dissolution, *samhārakṛtyam*. But that is not all. There is a third Factor which opens the way to liberation; otherwise there would be merely birth and death. This third is the dwelling of Him here and there in His supreme Compassion. It is His Grace that tends and leads upwards.

ŚAKTI

What, after all, is Śakti ? The spread, agency, the *kalā* of each thing is its Śakti.

What is covered by this Śakti is the principle of Parabrahman, called Śiva.

Gauḍapāda speaks of Cit as a free Cause of the manifestation of the universe, *citiḥ svatantra viśvasiddhi-hetuḥ.*

One is the Śakti of the Supreme Lord. Fourfold it divides itself in function : *Bhavāni* for enjoyment, *Viṣṇu* as the Puruṣa, *Kāḷi* in anger and *Durgā* in battle.*

How many kinds of Śakti are there ?

They are three. First there is the *Janma-siddha-śakti,* the Śakti with which one is born and which continues to the end of the life. This Divine Śakti manifesting with the very birth of the individual, is very rare.

The second is the *mādhyamaki śakti:* the Śakti that manifests and takes root when the mind is developed and its faculties or the faculties of the heart get ripe. It springs to birth in what is called the *bodhā-avasthā.*

**Ekaiva Śaktiḥ paramēśvarasya bhinnā caturdhā viniyōga kale; bhōge bhavāni puruṣe tu Viṣnuḥ kope ca kāli samare ca durgā.*

The third is the *kṣaṇika śakti*, the Śakti that is active in moments when one is engaged in favourable activities like *pūjā*, *dhyānā*, *japa*, holy company etc., when things are propitious for the breath of the Higher Power. Usually this Śakti stays as long as one lives in that atmosphere and withdraws when one comes out of it. Every one has its touch but he is not attentive to it. If he pays attention and cultivates it, then the *kṣaṇika śakti* develops into *mādhyamaki* and may even manifest as the *janmasiddha śakti* in the next birth.

Everything in the world is constituted of three modes : *padārtha*, the thing itself; *guṇa*, its quality; *prabhāva* its characteristic force. *Guṇa* and *prabhāva* attach themselves to the basic *padārtha;* but they do not necessarily disappear with the passing away of the *padārtha.* Each of these three has its own *niyati;* order, *kalā.* The fragrance, force of fragrance, of the flower continues even after the flower is removed from a place. Even when sandalwood is burnt and oil prepared from it,

its essential *guṇa*, property of cooling, and *prabhāva*, force of fragrance, continue.

Everything, every movement, has a centre, a *kēndra*, a regulation, *niyati*, a truth to fulfil, *śāsana*. Without a centre in the first place, it cannot function. Hence to enable the Divine Śakti to work in us there must first be formed a living centre in us around which it can organise itself and function. These are the several centres lying latent in us and which await to be awakened and set active.

None is free.

Everyone is subject to some thing, some force or other. One after the other they come and entangle him and he runs hither and thither led by the forces. It is only as the Great Force which is active universally becomes patent in his life and he is claimed by it that these various forces lose their hold and man rises free from them.

This is the Great Force that is called Kuṇḍalini in the human body. Centred round

the basal point called *Bindu*, it moves, round and round, up and below, in all directions and manifests in a thousand ways, in activities, in thoughts and in many other forms.

The original base of the Kuṇḍalini is called *svasthānāvasthini bhūmikā;* the next higher stage where she stations herself is the *unnayana bhūmikā;* next is *parāvartana bhūmikā;* and then comes the *viśrānti* or *samarasa bhūmikā.*

The pupil of the eye, *kaninikā*, is the outermost organ. There conceive Kāḷi, Dhūma, Chhinna.

Next inwards is the *Jyotirmaṇḍala*, the region of light. There conceive Tāra, Tripura Bhairavi, Bagala.

Innermost is the *Dṛṣṭimaṇḍala*, region of sight. There conceive Bhuvana, Kamala and Mātangi.

Presiding over all is *Śrī Lalitā.*

CREATION

They speak of different types of Creation in succession: creation by mind, idea, *mānasi;* creation by sight, *cākṣuśi;* creation by word, *vāciki*;* creation by touch, *spārśi;* creation by duality of sex, *maithuna.*

AVATĀR

The *avatāra* is of different kinds; *kṣaṇika,* temporary, *amśa,* of part or portion only, *pūrṇabodha,* fully conscious.

MUDRĀS

Mudrās are of several kinds. For instance what is known as the *lelihāna mudrā* which signifies the harmony between the Lord and the Śakti, *śivaśakti-sāmarasya; kāla-sankarṣini mudrā,* transcending Time and what is in Time; *cinnabhaṣcari mudrā,* of free movement in the sky of pure Consciousness; *vyomeśwari mudrā,*

---

*As by the Seers of old; their power of Vāk, *mantra-vīrya,* was self-effective .*Artha,* meaning, follows their *vācam,* speech.

where freed of attachments, one goes up in the higher air in the subtle body; *khecari mudrā* where one can walk in the air. There is also *krodhini mudrā*, where there is a determined anger and control over all by will; *karankiṇi mudrā*, where the attachment to the five Bhūtās or senses is snapped.

DHARMA

There are different Ages, *kālas*, in the history of Creation: Veda Kāla, Āgama Kāla, Smriti Kāla, Purāṇa Kāla and Itihāsa Kāla.

What was of the nature of secret content, *gupta dharma*, of the Veda was taken over by the Āgamas and what was external, *bāhya dharma*, was taken over by the Smriti. And this Dharma rests on the five pillars of affection, *snēha*; love, *prēma;* faith, *śraddhā;* devotion, *bhakti* and service, *sēvā.*

Dharma is designed to promote the growth of the *sāttvic* element in man who is bound by Nature. In collective society it underlies the *rāja* and other *nītis* for a similar end.

Artha is to be so pursued as to regulate *rāga-dveṣa*, desire and hatred. Purāṇas are intended to impress the necessity of this control.

Kāma is developed into a science by following which the inner enemies, *antaḥ śatru*, are controlled. The Smriti is of much help here.

Dharma sūtras are meant for the collective society in general.

Smārta sūtras are for people who are sufficiently evolved, *viśiṣṭa jana.*

Śrauta sūtras are for those who have arrived at an identity, *tādātmya* with what is above, the *divyamaṇḍala.* They are for the highest.

JĪVA

In one of the Tantrās the Jīvātma is conceived to be enclosed in a series of concentric circles. Thus the first enclosing circle or sheath is of smell, *ghrāṇendriya;* enclosing that is a bigger circle, of *śabda*, sound; next is *cākṣuśa*, of sight; the last and the final is of *tvak*, touch;

this last is the *vāsanāmaya* sheath which sticks the longest to the *jīvātma* even when it has dissolved the other three sheaths which drop away after the death of the body, one after another.

The Ātma is spoken of as of five different categories :

Ātmā
Antarātmā
Jñānātmā
Paramātmā
Bhūtātmā

The Ātma and the Antarātma are related to each other by Prāṇa.

The Ātma and the Bhūtātma are related to each other by the Body.

In the Tantrās, the Brahmagranthi governs the domain of the Bhūtātma; Vishṇugranthi governs that of Ātma and Antarātma; Rudra-granthi of Jñānātma.

The *kancuka*, covering, cloak, of the Prāṇa is the body.

The *kancuka* of Jīva is Prāṇa.

The *kancuka* of Ātma is Jīva.

Then, what is Jīva ? Is it anything different from Ātma ?

Ātma in association with Prāṇa is Jīva.

Śiva in constriction is Jīva, *sankucitaḥ śivo jīvaḥ.*

It is an old controversy regarding Bīja vs. Samskarās. The fact is that Samskāras, however strong, can only cover and affect the operative aspect of the original being, *bīja*, which remains unsullied. The Samskāras of different kinds, viz. of *niyati*, of *kalā*, of *kāla* etc. work together, each time with a different emphasis; but the essential character of the *bīja* remains the same.

JNĀNA

In our tradition you are not asked to accept anything as authoritative unless you experience it. *Pramāṇa* is what is experienced, *yad anubhūyate tadeva pramāṇam.*

There are things which can be reasoned out. There are things which are beyond the reason of the mind. It is wise not to question by the mind what is truly beyond it. *

Knowing comes by stages. First there is a seeking to know, an aspiration, *śodanā*. Then follows a growing consciousness of oneself, one's own strength and weakness, *samvedanā*. Next is the awareness of others, an understanding awareness of their needs and condition, *āvedanā*. Last comes *vid*, *jñāna*.

Only that Jñāna is real Jñāna which leads you to merge in the Divine, to the *līna-bhāva*.

GURU

The Lord is not indifferent to the lot of creatures in the creation. In fact, it is said, that his one preoccupation is to tend and help out each being released by him in manifestation.

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* *atarkyāh caiva ye bhāvāh na tānstarkeṇa tarkayet.*

Each one He helps from birth to birth, from scale to scale of creation, till at last the human birth is attained. Even there, when enough experience has been gained and the man feels a suffocation and asks for release, He appears as the *Guru*, lays down the regulation, the *ācāra*, by following which the man has his bonds snapped and attains to the station of the supreme Lord.

Follow the *ācāra*, the *samācāra*, sanctified by the Guru; that will dissolve the bonds that tie.

Who is qualified to be a Guru ?

The Tantras declare that the Dīkṣa Guru is he who knows the Āgama (authentic scripture), is skilful in action, devoted to the Supreme Guru Śambhu, full of peace, compassionate to all, sweet of speech, following the happy tradition, incomparable in all his parts, wise of the world.

The *pādukā* (of the Guru) are so called because they are capable of holding and sustain-

ing us at every step, *pade pade asmākam pada-dhāraṇakṣamā pādukā.*

Yes, it is a fact that the Karma of the disciples and of those who seek refuge in him, fall on the Guru. Fire burns as long as dry fuel is thrown in, in right quantities. But if one begins to throw in it all manner of things and that too in excessive quantities, the fire gets dull and gradually gets extinguished.

At such times, one must withdraw and put oneself in complete tune with the sustaining Śakti.

Dīkṣā, initiation, is of several kinds. Broadly, it may be said that for those who are ready already, *siddhādhikārin*, it is the *vedhamayi*, *medhāmayi* Dīkṣa that are used. For those who have to acquire the necessary competence, *sādhyādhikārins*, the Dīkṣa is *śābdi*, *cākṣuśi* and *spārṣi*, by word, by glance, by touch, respectively.

Vedhamayi is a movement directed within the consciousness of the Guru so as to communicate itself to the disciple.

Medhāmayi is a similar movement of thought.

DEVATA

A Way is necessary for the Highest Grace to reach the seeker. Similarly a Way is necessary for the seeker to reach the Highest. The Deity provides the Way.

There is mention in the Rig Veda of how when a Rica wanted to reach up to the Divine, it sought for a means to do that and Agni was the Way.

There are three conditions for a true, fruitful worship of the Dēvi to be possible. One must shed the three desires, desire for wealth, *vitteṣaṇā;* desire for woman, *dāraiṣaṇā;* desire for worldly success, *lokeṣaṇā.* He who is free from these three attachments can alone tread the Path of Her adoration. That is the real *saubhāgya. Īṣaṇā-traya-nirmuktah saubhāgyārcanam ācaret.*

Should you invoke one Deity but worship quite another, you will receive the curses of both.*

Tat savitur vareṇyam bhargoḥ devasya....

The Bharga here is the Supreme Light which lights up the very sun. It is greater than the sun. The sun has *niyati*, a regulation, but the Bharga has none. That Light really bears up all, (*bhṛng bharaṇe*).

MANTRA

Just as all the characteristic qualities and power of the Tree is concentrated and latent in the seed, similarly the power, the presence and characteristic qualities of expression of the Deity are there present in the Mantra. It embodies not only the Presence but also the Way to reach the Deity.

*Āvhāya devatām ekam arcayed anya devatām ubhābhyām labhate śāpam.

MANTRA SĀDHANA

The power of *mantra* is undefinable, *mantrāṇām acintya śaktitā*. There are two kinds of this Sādhana; *bhautika* and *naiṣṭhiki*. The former is largely for the satisfaction of worldly desires, gaining human ends in ordinary life. This is certainly not my way. The other is devoted solely to spiritual pursuit, for realizing the Divine. Worldly happiness may result in the course of this Sādhana but that is incidental. The main aim is to grow into the Truth of the Divine Consciousness.

In a sense the way of all Yoga is one. For instance, there is so much of correspondence between the Mantra Sādhana and the Patañjala Yoga. The first four limbs of *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma* in the latter bring about a purification of the body and its *samskāras;* this is brought about in the Mantra Sādhana by *pūja*, *japa*, *stava* etc. which bathe the body ceaselessly in higher vibrations and orientate its tendencies Godward. The imposition of *niyama*, control over the senses, *indriyas*, by *pratyāhāra* has its parallel here in the *antaḥkaraṇa samskāra* brought about in the course of

fulfilling the demands of *mantra-japa*. The last three termed *sāmyama* by Patanjali correspond to what we call the *ātma-samskāra*, discipline and purification of the inner being.

The one goal set before the Sādhaka for immediate attainment is a constant, ceaseless living in the Divine Consciousness, *sadā cid anubhāvanam*. Work must be done but without desire for fruit, *phalam tyaktvā karma-kāraṇam*. In fact this is one of the demands upon the sādhaka. All these are means for achieving the true object of human life and that is indeed the ascertainment and realization of one's true self, *sva vimarśah puruṣārthah*.

JAPA

Japa is so called because it snaps the tie of birth which is the result of Karma of the series of previous births, *janmāntaraphala-pratibandhakasya janma-vicchedah;* and because it destroys all sin, *pāpanāśanam*.

Japa has been well defined as not what is repeated externally but the resounding *nāda*,

sound, inside, when the movement of the *indriyas*, senses, is checked.*

That is true japa where all inertia, and indolence, fall away when you start it. The awareness gets sharpened, alert, mental movements fall quiet and only two remain : he who does the japa and He who is the object of japa, the *vācaka* and the *vācya*.

When you are tired of *japa* take to *dhyāna;*
When tired of *dhyāna*, take to *japa;*
When tired of both, take to the laud, *stava*.

They say it is best to recite the praises of God, *stava*, composed by the Rishis or equally realized persons. In a poetic image it is said, that whenever such verses are recited, God recollects having heard them somewhere before – when the great soul chanted them for Him – and rushes to where they are now being sung.

**Samyatendriya sancārah proccarita nādamantaram eśa eva japah proktah nanu bāhyajapo japah.*

A sacred verse yields its meaning without difficulty to one who has thirst for it, *pipāsā;* but if the mind is full of its own importance, how can the meaning find room to enter?

UPĀSANA

There are three fundamental truths :

(1) The Supreme Lord has his Śakti which is inseparable from Him.

(2) Each individual has within himself a consciousness, a Śakti which is derived from the Supreme Śakti.

(3) The Supreme Śakti has spread itself in the universe of its creation in several ways, several forms, at several levels. The formulations at the higher levels which are engaged in conducting the manifestation are the Deities. They are also charged with leading man from his station on earth upwards and upwards till he reaches the Source. And the process to connect oneself, one's consciousness with these Deities is what is called *Upāsanā.*

The seeker when he begins the *upāsanā* is something like a child coming out of his

mother's womb. He is just emerging from the womb of Prakriti. The awakening and functioning of faculties is gradual. Thus in meditation, it takes time to get collected, calm etc. It takes time for thoughts to dwindle. Oneness of concentration or blankness of mind are more or less final conditions of a stage which comes after effort, not at the very beginning. One should not therefore worry overmuch about this. What is required is steady application, keeping punctual timings and sincere effort.

Upāsanā is really the *saguṇa mārga*, path of adoration of the Divine with Form.

There are three grades, *bhūmikās*, in Pūja. The lowest consisting of *nyāsa*, *mudrā* etc. is for the ordinary type of men; praise, *stava*, repetition of mantra, *japa*, are for the middle; meditation, *dhyāna*, absorption, *laya*, for the highest, the best.*

*Pujākōtisamam stotram stotrakoṭisamam japah Japakōṭisamam dhyānam dhyānakōṭisamo layah.

ANUṢṬHĀNA

Anuṣṭhāna is external ritual, *bāhya vṛtti.*
Anusandhāna is the inner mode, *antar vṛtti.*

Power, Śakti, can be aroused not by mantra alone. It can be so done by *bhāva* of *tādātmiya*, oneness with Him, by *niṣṭhā*, discipline, by *vyavasthā*, set order etc. It is of course understood that the quality of the vibrations aroused are different from case to case.

It is a mistake to think that in the Kaula Mārga one identifies oneself with the Prakriti and flies with it. Actually there is One (the Divine Śakti) who is at play in the Prakriti. The sādhaka aims to put himself into contact with Her. For that purpose he draws the Prakriti nearer. Once the Inner Reality is experienced the outer cloak falls off by itself.

There is so much of misunderstanding about the term *vāma mārga.* What is really *vāma ? Vāma* is what is beautiful, *vāmam vayunam sundaram iti.* There is another derivation. *Vāma* is She who ejects from Herself the All,

viśvam vamati iti vāmā; and Her Path is the *vāmah, tasyāh mārgah vāmah.*

Dissatisfaction with things as they are should develop into a feeling of pain; then only it acts as an urge, a goad to move forward. This is the inner ache, *antarvedanā,* that is compared to the sting of an ant.*

Take your stand in Prakriti, the Original Nature and not in Vikriti, its derivative formations (of Ignorance).

They speak of gross mind, wicked mind and awakened mind, *jaḍa cetanā, duṣṭa cetanā, sacetanā.* That shows that it is possible for the *samskāras* to reach beyond the gross and the subtle and the causal bodies, seize the consciousness and soil it. And it is for the purpose of releasing the mind from such a condition and make it alive with the inviolable Consciousness that there are prescribed *pūjā, japa, dhyāna* etc.

**pipilika-dańśavat antarvedanā.*

So, deliberate upon it, and with seriousness of movement, make of yourself a receptacle of the Free Consciousness–Force.

CIKITSA

Cikitsā is attention to and treatment of the body, the material.

Vicikitsā relates to the movement, *vṛtti*, the Guṇa of the thing.

Stop your *vṛtti*, mental movements and movements of life-energy. In that stoppage you will have stopped the movements of others falling on you.

Make your state of being calm, steady, freed of thought-currents, good and bad, and engage yourself in your work. One does not find pearls by busying oneself with the waves of the vast ocean. So too, association with men ever heaving with undefinable thought-waves, leaves one without, far from attaining the state of Grace of the Mother who is wave-less.

Think of Him. Wait for Him. Look joyously at His Līla. Neither Tantrā nor Mantrā is necessary if you can do it and lose yourself in this adoration. This is what is known as *vyoma-yōga*, the path where one does not depend upon any support as such, *ālambana*.

There are surely many kinds of Yoga.

We have spoken of *vyoma yoga*. There is *mantra yoga*. Then there is *bhuvana yoga*, when the Vibhūti of the Divine is definite to you in anything, in anyone. The *vigraha yoga* is where you adcre and concentrate upon a *vigraha*, any one or anything in which the Presence or Consciousness is specially manifest, *viśeṣeṇa gṛhṇāti iti vigrahah*.

Look into your being which is an emanation of this Throb, one with Him.

Look into the true nature of the world which is His Play of manifestation.

Look and find out the Place of your origin.

The realization of the self, *ātmānubhūti*, is to be achieved by oneself. Another can help in

the process but he cannot do it for you. For after all, you are the cause, you have the *ātman* in yourself and you have to see, experience and realize it yourself.

Some of the Tantras expound in detail. Some others are brief. Resort to one Tantra taking refuge with the Guru of that Path.

THE MOTHER*

The Mother is self-luminous, *swayamprakāśā*. She does not need anyone's help to illumine, shine or manifest. The most we can do is to see that on our account no dimming or darkening walls come up around this Light.

The lustre of the Flame is not destroyed by the flicker of the swarm of fire-flies round and round.

Our relation is with Her, the Mother indescribable, who stands thiswise.

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*Residing in Śrī Aurobindo Ashram.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

I distinctly remember two notable incidents in my life which had a clear supernatural character. One is about the *nāda* which I used to hear. The other is this :

I was given to BALĀ mantra japa. From childhood I used to have difficulty in seeing clearly during nights. I would stumble against people, dash against things and so on. One day as I was coming out of the house, I did not see the steps that led from the floor of the house. The road was four feet below. Without seeing it I simply walked on from the raised floor. But I did not fall. I was simply lifted up and placed softly on the ground. By whom ? By whom indeed !

Once when I was very young there was a serious danger to the health of my sister or someone in the house. I went to my father and asked him to do his *mantra* and ward off the danger. He shook his head.

" Why don't you do it ? " I asked.

" I cannot. "

"Then ask the Mantra Devata to do it, she is with you, is she not ?"

"Yes, she is; but, won't do it. She is there not to ward off dangers, but to laugh, eat and live with me."

"Then why is she with you at all ?" I asked in my boyish impatience.

"*To lift me up and take me to her place when my body dies.*"

GENERAL

PARĀŚARA

Vasiṣṭha is the model for *Śānti* among our Rishis. It is recorded that when Śakti, his only son left after the massacre of the rest of his sons by Viśwāmitra, was killed by a demon, he remained calm and unmoved. So did his wife Arundhati in some measure. But Śakti had a wife. During that night Vasiṣṭha heard a Veda chant. He did not know from where he heard it. So he went out of the house to investigate and looked for the source of sound in all directions. But he could not trace it. Then he found the voice coming out of his own home. Following the sound he returned, re-entered the

house and went in to find the sound coming out of the womb of Śakti's wife : in the womb lay a child who later came to be celebrated as Parāśara.

VARIETIES OF SAMBANDHA

There are several kinds of relation, *sambandha*, spoken of in the Tantras. There is the *para-sambandha*, *mahat-sambandha* and the *antarāla-sambandha;* these three are what obtain among the Gods, between themselves or with their Supreme Lord. The fourth is the *divya-sambandha* between the Gods and the Rishis who connect themselves with the Gods through their subtle bodies – the relation on the subtler planes. Then there is the *divya-adivya sambandha*, between the *divya* and the *adivya*, godly and non-godly, the Gods and the Rishis on earth here. The *adivya sambandha* is the relation between these Rishis and mortal men.

ADHIKĀRA

There is always the question of *adhikāra*, whatever the field of life. One with the necessary competence and authority in spiritual matters will always be effective in that sphere. He will not engage himself, normally, in

worldly affairs though he may lend his hand there. Similarly, in the collective life of society, only he can lead and mould the direction who is endowed with the capacity to identify himself with the collective soul.

GAIN OF WEALTH

Is it not possible to gain wealth by occult means ? Is there no *kriyā* in the Tantra for this purpose ?

There is. But there are certain conditions for such demands to be met. First, there must be the *vedanā*, a real distress due to want of wealth. Second, there should be an *āvedanā*, an intense feeling for the sufferings of others around. And third, one must have in oneself what is called *samvedanā;* it is a felt awareness of one's own limitations and drawbacks and a sincere urge to overcome them.

MANGALAM

Mangalam, auspicious happiness, has an interesting derivation. *Mām* is the ego, *ahankāra tattva;* the dropping of it, *galana*, is *mangala.**

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* *ahankāratattvasya mām iti giyate, tasya galane mangalam.*

ĀSHRAM

Among the traditional signs, *lakṣaṇa*, of an Āshram is the presence of wild animals in a state of quiet, *praśānta*. That is to say the wild propensities of the inmates are subjugated and changed by the very atmosphere of the Āshram.

PRĀYASCHITTA

Prāyaścitta, repentance, consists not in taking the prescribed *prasāda*, the *pancagavya** but in the change of inner condition, *bhāva*.

HAṬHA

Haṭha, obstinacy, is said to be of several kinds : *strīhaṭha*, obstinacy of the woman; *yogihaṭha*, persistance of the yogin; *bālahaṭha*, insistence of the infant; *rājahaṭha*, the unyielding demand of the king.

ŚAṢṬIABDAPŪRTI

The meaning of *śaṣṭiabda-pūrti* is the propitiation of the planets, *grahas*. At the end of sixty years all the *grahas* return to the original position which they had on the very first day of the birth of the person. A full cycle is

*A preparation of five ingredients, ghee, milk etc.

completed and before the next round begins the *grahas* are worshipped and propitiated.

GODS AND MANES

The Gods have the body of fire, the manes of water.*

SIDDHI

There are *siddhis* and *siddhis*. There is for instance the *siddhi* by *āsana-jaya*, conquest of *āsana*; by being able to sit in a particular position one gets certain powers. Similarly by the knowledge and use of certain herbs.

PHYSICIAN AND LIFE-SPAN

Who has control over the life-span of another? Even the physician can only diagnose the nature of the malady and control or stop the pain. But he is no master of the life-duration.†

āgneya śaririṇo hi dēvāh
jalaśaririṇah piṭrdevatāh.

†*Vyādheh tattvāparijnānam vedanāyāṛca nigrahah, etad vaidyasya vaidyatvam na vaidyah prabhurāyuṣah.*

LANGUAGE

Language is described as of three kinds : *siddhabhāṣā*, perfect language, *sanketa bhāṣā*, symbolic language and *vyavahāra bhāṣā*, language for common use.

THE WISE ONE

The wise one grieves not over the past, worries not over the future, he lives in the present.*

*Gatam no ṛocayet prājnah, bhaviṣyam naiva cintayet, vartamānena kālena vartante hi manīṣiṇah.